

PAPA DELL AND HIS FAMILY



The Life
of
Soviet
Citizens
of
German Origin

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Novosti Press Agency Publishing House
Moscow, 1975

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Editing completed on September 26, 1975

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SOVIET GERMANS

An anthology of poems and stories written by German authors resident in the USSR was published in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1974 under the title of "Kazakhstan News". This was the first book of its kind to be put out in the FRG. It gives a sampling of thirty-six writers whose material has come out in German in the USSR either separately or in magazine columns. Its appearance denotes the mounting public interest in West Germany in the USSR generally and in Soviet citizens of German nationality specifically.

Considering the broadening economic, trade and cultural links between the FRG and the USSR, there is nothing at all surprising that West Germans want to know more about various aspects of Soviet life, especially, how citizens of German descent live in the USSR. One can only regret that such publications in the West German periodicals are often based on inadequately competent, at times frankly tendencious, sources of information.

A Few Figures

The 1939 census placed the number of ethnic Germans resident in the USSR at 1,423,534, of whom some 400,000 lived along the Volga,

slightly less in the Eastern trans-Urals regions of the Russian Federation and in neighbouring Kazakhstan, and the remainder, mostly in the South of the European USSR. Hence, before the war there were three regions with a more or less compact German population living mainly in the countryside.

By 1959, the census placed their number at 1,619,655, overwhelmingly resident in the Eastern USSR-in the Urals, adjacent regions of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Central Asia, At that time a far larger proportion were skilled industrial and building workers.

The 1970 census provided further evidence of the steady upward swing in the number of Soviet Germans, who by then totalled 1,846,317 living in all the Soviet republics, including the Volga area. However, in preceding years most had settled for good in the Eastern USSR, which of late has entered a phase of rapid development. The proportion of the intelligentsia, highly skilled industrial and agricultural specialists, educators, physicians, cultural workers, artists and government and Party functionaries has increased notably and an increasing number of Germans are going to colleges and military institutions and are employed in the militia.

History

By the late 17th century Moscow had a German neighbourhood which was a favourite haunt of the young tsar Peter the Great. But only towards the latter half of the 18th century did German farmers and artisans migrate to Russia in any noticeable number to escape the religious perse-

cution and tyranny of their spiritual and temporal overlords then rife in feudally divided Germany. Most settled in Southern Russia and along the middle Volga.

At the beginning of this century, in addition to the above-mentioned two main centres of German residence, that had emerged a century earlier, there appeared German communities in Siberia, in the Altai territory, near Omsk, Orenburg and elsewhere, and in Kazakhstan,

When the First World War broke out eligible males from the German communities were mobilized and sent to fight against Turkey. Those who survived the hazards and rigors of soldiering, returned home with guns and with revolution in their hearts, thus lending impetus to the class struggles that had erupted in the German communities as elsewhere in the country.

The October 1917 Revolution began a new page in the life of the descendants of the German colonists. Factory workers and toiling peasants and farm labourers among them responded to the call made by Lenin and his Bolshevik Party and set about shaping a new life. Along with the other nationalities of the erstwhile tsarist empire, they energetically contributed to the great countrywide revolutionary upheaval. Many displayed valor during the Civil War in Budenny's famous Cavalry Army and in other units of the then young Red Army. Then came the austerity of economic recovery, industrialization and the collectivization of farming. In the process of these revolutionary transformations the new Soviet way of life took root in the German communities, changing the way of thinking and mores. The rising generation found doors wide open to learning and public activity. No wonder ethnic Ger-

mans, wherever they lived, in the Ukraine, along the Volga or in Siberia, looked upon themselves as Soviet Germans.

Time of Trial

Nazi Germany's treacherous invasion of the USSR was a grim test for all the Soviet peoples, including the Soviet Germans. In 1941 it became imperative to organize the wholesale evacuation of the population from regions directly menaced by nazi occupation. The Volga Germans were evacuated to trans-Urals areas. However many were trapped by the advancing Wehrmacht. Having massacred Party and government functionaries and the more active collective farmers, the occupation authorities declared the remaining Soviet Germans Volksdeutsche and deported them to Germany in their retreat, in what was in effect an act of wholesale kidnapping of citizens of another country, an outright violation of the universally accepted norms of international law (most Soviet Germans thus deported were subsequently freed by Soviet troops and returned home. However, those in Western-occupied regions were detained by the local authorities. As a result some Soviet Germans have found themselves with relatives in West Germany today.)

The torrent of nazi wartime anti-Soviet propaganda and unremitting calls to those known as the "Volksdeutsche" were in some measure responsible for Soviet Germans becoming suspect in the complex situation of war. And the number fighting at the front was limited. Notwithstanding, quite a number of the heroes fighting the nazis at the front and in the enemy rear were So-

viet Germans wholeheartedly devoted to their socialist Homeland. Among the many who could be named were Major Alexander Dulkeit, Nikolai Kiinge, Heinrich Kiihling and Eduard Miller, who participated in the defence of the Brest Fortress; Hero of the Soviet Union Robert Klein, a partisan scout; Hero of the Soviet Union Peter Miller, a tankman; Hero of the Soviet Union artillery general Sergei Volkenstein; Nikolai Heft, a highly competent intelligence officer who headed an underground group in occupied Odessa and who was killed later in the fighting to liberate Poland; Anna Ochman, Eugenie Bremer, Emilia Duckhart and her daughter Magda, four courageous women active in the partisan movement in the Ukraine.

Most Soviet Germans spent the war doing good work in industry, construction and farming in the hinterland. As the result of mass evacuation the old German communities in Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia expanded and more appeared there.

In One Family

The Communist Party and Soviet Government took decisive steps to rectify earlier injustices and restore the good name of the Soviet Germans. In its decree of August 29, 1964, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet stated that the previous blanket accusations levelled against the Soviet Germans had been unfounded, a manifestation of arbitrariness that was an outcome of the Stalin personality cult. "In fact," this document said, "during the Great Patriotic War, along with the entire Soviet people, the overwhelming

majority of Soviet Germans contributed by their work to the Soviet victory over fascist Germany, while since the end of the war they have been taking an active part in building communism."

The decree then noted that Soviet Germans were conscientiously working at industrial enterprises, farms and offices and were active in public life. Many are elected deputies to the Supreme Soviets and local Soviets in the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia and other republics and hold high posts in industry, farming, government and Party bodies. Thousands have been decorated with orders and medals or awarded titles of merit for labour achievements.

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet instructed the Republican Councils of Ministers, for the purpose of further stimulating the development of regions with German communities and with an eye to national distinctions and interests, to continue to aid and assist Germans living in the respective republics in their effort to advance the economy and culture there.

In view of this, the Presidium took into account that in the elapsed period the Germans had settled in the new places, whereas the regions of their prewar domicile had already been occupied. Hence, to restore German autonomy in the Volga region would necessitate the resettling of large numbers of people long domiciled there, who had either built their own houses or had been housed by the state, and had acclimatized to their surroundings. In passing, one might note that interested Germans had long since moved to the Volga area, the Caucasus and other parts of the USSR. However, many stayed on in the East, now looked upon as home by the rising genera-

tion-though, like all other Soviet citizens, Soviet Germans are free to choose where they wish to live in the USSR.

National Distinctions

Though something of a blanket term, national distinctions are merely the manifestations of deep-seated processes. German communities and families in the USSR have still kept some of their traditions and customs, apart from the language which has heavy dialectal overtones. Yet even here one quickly senses the new content, the Soviet fabric underlying the life and mentality of the Soviet Germans as a living branch of that mighty oak known as the united family of Soviet peoples.

Among the old folks one still finds some, mostly women, who speak German only. However, most Soviet Germans, especially the middle-aged and younger people, have a fluent command of Russian, insofar as Russian is the means of communication with people of all nationalities in any of the Soviet republics. True, in German village communities people speak German with a distinct dialectal flavour, and not only at home. The school curriculum is so arranged that any schoolchild can acquire still greater fluency in German.

There are officially two forms of German-language study: as one's native tongue, in which case instruction starts from the second year at school and continues up to school-leaving age, and as a foreign language, with instruction commencing from the fifth year at school. Currently, proceeding from 20-year-long experience, prepa-

rations are being made to switch to a new system whereby German children will receive instruction in their native language and literature from the start of school to school-leaving. However, all other disciplines will be taught in Russian to enable the school-leaver to be in a position to freely enter any higher or specialized secondary educational establishment in the USSR. A number of schools of this order are to be found in both town and country; moreover they often accept non-German children at the request of their parents. The appropriate German-language teachers for the elementary stage at such schools are trained at special departments of specialized secondary schools. Such teachers for senior forms are trained at special departments of teacher colleges. Student enrollment at such departments consists primarily of Soviet Germans.

Published for Soviet Germans in Moscow is the German-language weekly "Neues Leben". Put out specially for Germans living in Kazakhstan is the large-format daily "Freundschaft." Another paper, published for Germans living in the Altai Territory, is the "Rote Fahne." The central radio stations of Alma-Ata and Frunze, the capital cities respectively of Kazakhstan and Kirghizia, as well as several territorial and regional stations broadcast special programmes in German for Soviet German listeners. Finally the German departments at the Moscow "Progress" and *Prosveshchenie* {*Enlightenment*) publishing houses, at the "Kazakhstan" Publishers and at some smaller local publishing houses put out works by Soviet German authors and other literature for German speakers. For their benefit a wide range of books is brought in from the GDR,

The aforementioned newspaper offices and

publishing houses have attracted a large number of Soviet German authors, fifteen of whom are members of the Writers' Union of the USSR. The more popular prose writers and poets among them include such names as Andreas Saks, Dominik Hollmann, Victor Klein, Johann Warkentin, Robert Weber and Edmund Giinther. The "Ballad About My Friends" anthology, put out recently by the Progress Publishers of Moscow, incorporates the works of some 60 authors.

One cannot fail to mention here the German "Freundschaft" variety group, whose tours of town and country always draw appreciative audiences, the lecturing teams giving lectures and talks in German for native speakers, and the local talent activities conducted in German at schools and clubs. Still Soviet Germans no doubt owe their most significant achievements to their being in the general swim of overall Soviet scientific and cultural development. Among Soviet German scientific and artistic celebrities one could mention such world-famous persons as the pianist Rudolf Kehrner, the eminent Tomsk linguist Professor Andreas Dulson, and the renowned Polar explorer Academician Otto Schmidt.

The life of an individual often helps towards an understanding of the lot of an entire nationality and its place in the fabric of Soviet society. In this respect it would be of interest to quote from the report which General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid I. Brezhnev presented to the 24th CPSU Congress. "A new historical community of people, the Soviet people, took shape in our country during the

years of socialist construction," he said. "New, harmonious relations, relations of friendship and cooperation, were formed between the classes and social groups, nations and nationalities in joint labour, in the struggle for socialism and in the battle fought in defence of socialism." This is all true, in full measure, of Soviet Germans as part and parcel of the multinational Soviet state.

MAN OF LEGEND

"During the war I met many brave men among the partisans and I have written and told of many with feelings of deep respect for everything they did. However, I was struck by Robert Klein's daredevil eoiirage. This was pluck of the most amazing order."

Hero oi the Soviet Union
Pyotr VERSHIGORA

War Wounds

The reporter finds it hard to get Robert Klein to open up. Hordes of enterprising, JVLoscow newspapermen have gone to Orel, but so far none has come up with a human-interest story about the life of this partisan scout. Will I succeed? Robert Klein dislikes talking about the war. You may ask him for details of an episode of 30 years ago, but he will look over your shoulder and tap his pencil impatiently on his desk, as if to say: "Aren't tiere enough good and bad things around worth writing about? After all, I've been written up in the press time and again, so why go over it all once more?"

I don't put any questions, since I sense that this is not an exaggerated modesty, but a very candid reluctance to dig into the past and recall

things that once demanded every ounce of one's energy.

"Robert" I say. "I really don't want to poke into your war wounds, but you must realize that Victory Day is coming, and we pressmen are quite naturally interested in the war as a theme to talk about."

"That's, of course, important," he agrees. "But what amazes me is how glibly some newspapermen write about that ordeal. After all, war is more than a daredevil escapade of a reconnaissance patrol or men going over the top with shouts of 'Hurrah', War is horrible, far more horrible than one who has never seen it can imagine."

He pauses to light a cigarette. "It's our local brand," he says. "Want one?" And again he peers musingly through the window.

"Just a short while before the war began," he commences, "I finished a tankmen's school in Ulyanovsk, My class met after the war, that is, the seven remaining survivors,"

There is a silence. Rings of tobacco smoke loop into one another and waft away. I fear our chat will also dwindle to naught in these sustained pauses.

"You hail from the Volga, don't you?" I ask.

"That's so. From the tiny village of Miller, which is near Balzer, if that means anything to you."

"It sure does. My parents are from that place."

"Is that so? Then we're from the same parts, aren't we? Your name's Weber, isn't it? Now, wait a moment, as a youngster I spent eight years in Balzer and I distinctly remember the big house there with the iron roof. So you're one of those Webers?" His eyes twinkle; We-

bers were good to me. Now look here, why are we sitting here, in this smoke-filled room on such a fine sunny day? Suppose we take a look round Orel. After all, a reporter has to see something of his 'victim's' background as well, nicht wahr?"

"We Began from Scratch"

In his light-green Volga, Robert Klein, head manager of the Orel Auto Trust, drives me through the city's streets, slowing down only in front of shiny blue April puddles. He was making a routine round of the 24 garages that come under the Trust, each one with hundreds of vehicles. Much like the drops of blood coursing through the arteries, buses, trucks and taxicabs travel round the clock over the asphalted roads of Orel and region. Robert's auto trust is a remarkably complicated affair! To keep it going he has to make dozens of decisions an hour, maintain constant contact with hundreds of factories, organizations, farms and building sites, review what's been done and plan what comes next. Robert's trust has an excellent reputation. Only recently he was decorated with the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and awarded the "Honoured Motor Transport Man" badge.

"Long with the trust, Robert?" I ask,

"Ever since I went back to Civvy Street."

As we pass the monument erected to Orel's liberators, Klein says: "Orel has risen like a Phoenix out of the ashes. We began from scratch in 1945, There was nothing but rubble. Everything you see here now was built after the war.

everything was done!

Incidentally, I used to go hunting here, where we're now."

"What about the housing problem?"

"It's still acute. As you see, there are building cranes all around; though thirty years have passed the impact of war is still felt."

Limping through the gates of one of the trust's garages, Robert makes for the office. On the way, he shakes hands, pats someone on the back, or smiles in greeting. His remarks are brief. This huge organization is working smoothly. The manager's "German thoroughness" has become a by-word. The drivers know that Klein detests laxness on the job. "There aren't many incorrigible loafers, perhaps two or three to a hundred. But they are just like that proverbial fly in the honey," Klein says.

We return to downtown Orel and, after a little winding and weaving, find ourselves in front of an inconspicuous looking creamy yellow-green cottage. "My place," Robert says, and the creases in his face smooth. "Please step in."

Bagging Hares for the Gestapo

I have a pile of time-yellowed snapshots before me. Some of the faces seem familiar. Of course, the man with the goatee is Sidor Kovpak, the famous Soviet partisan commander, who was twice awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. By his side is a conspicuous flowing beard that can belong only to Pyotr Vershigora, partisan-turned-writer, author of "Men with a Clear Conscience," a book about partisan life. And this is the then young and energetic face of partisan intelligence chief Robert Klein, whom the parti-

sans had jokingly dubbed "The colonel from the fiihrer's staff." He won the nickname in July 1943 and shortly afterwards the distinguished title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

But that was later. At first.

Robert Klein, a Volga German tractor-driver from Saratov region, had finished the Ulyanovsk tankmen's school with distinction. He then served in the Far East, and in the Ukraine. He underwent his baptism of fire at Belaya Tserkov, west of Kiev, in the summer of 1941, as commanding officer of an armoured reconnaissance battalion. In August, when the frontlines reached the Dnieper and Soviet forces were defending Kiev, he was given the assignment to capture a prisoner for interrogation purposes. In the day observers had reported that the nazis were busy digging trenches on the other bank, and that they could see clouds of dust which probably meant mechanized columns were coming up.

However, it was necessary to check on this. That night Robert, at the head of a force of twenty men, noiselessly slipped over to the other bank under cover of a thunderstorm and a heavy curtain of rain. With prompt efficiency they put out of action an enemy patrol and two sentries in camouflage suits. Without firing a single shot they took two prisoners, a private first class, and a company clerk in the outside dugout. However, the assignment would hardly have passed off without a hitch had it not been for Lieutenant Robert Klein's impeccable German.

About a month later, he was hit in the leg in a defensive engagement at Oster near Chernigov. He was put aboard an ambulance train. However, the train was brought to a halt by a torn-up section of track near a small village. It turned out

that the nazis were already in possession of the area. With extreme difficulty Robert crawled towards a field of sunflowers behind the back yards and hid there until he was taken in by an Ukrainian collective farmer's family. Though complete strangers, they took good care of him, tending him throughout the winter. By the next March he was already able to move around, and, at the head of some dozen villagers, set off in search of the partisans. In the steppes of the Ukraine only wooded gullies, fens and reeds afford concealment. In one such place partisans from the Chapayev detachment met Klein. For his knowledge of German he was made a partisan scout.

One day Klein learned from a local cobbler, who on his rounds of neighbouring villages for work, also gathered plenty of information, that a German mechanic by the name of Kreis had been assigned to the Gebietskommissar's office in Pereyaslav, and that on his way there the German had taken time out for a rest in a nearby village. The Kreis who reported to Pereyaslav was Robert Klein. Within a short time, Robert had the local garage in tip-top condition, by which means he wormed his way into the confidence of the Gebietskommissar. He was appointed manager of the garage of the regional commissariat. His only weak point in the eyes of the Gebietskommissar was that he kept taking out the van to go hunting. But all the Gebietskommissar wanted was fresh partridge and hare for his table, and also that Klein-Kreis not overdo it because of the daring partisan raids that were getting worse. Strangely enough, each time a trussed hare was dumped on the Gebietskommissar's table, there would come news of an act of

sabotage at Yagotino or of a night attack on the Kommandant's office in Krasnograd.

Then came the day when Kreis, now Robert Klein again, reported somewhere in the Khotsky forests: "Comrade commander of the partisan division, in compliance with a resolution taken by the underground movement organization, the garage of the Pereyaslavl Gebietskommissar's office has been destroyed. This is Senior Lieutenant Robert Klein reporting with a column of trucks."

Comrade-in-Arms

But where was this photograph taken? And who is this tall, strapping Kazakh embracing Robert in a bear hug?

"That's my Kazakh brother," Klein grins. "It was taken when I visited him. Kasym Kaisenov is now a well-known writer who lives in Alma-Ata. During the war he commanded the Chapayev partisan detachment."

A flashback now to a partisan dugout in a gully. Flames flicker in the small home-made stove. Robert Klein is divesting himself of his German officer's uniform complete with Iron Cross and an array of medals. He places it beneath a pillow of padded jackets on top of a makeshift bunk.

"Finished with your adventures in Pereyaslavl, Robert? Are your masquerading days over?"

Tossing a lock of blond hair back from his forehead Klein crinkles his eyes as he retorts: "Oh no, my masquerading days have only just begun!"

These two, ever-optimistic, fun-loving young men became fast friends at once. Time and again

they went out on reconnaissance patrols together. They lost count of the number of trains derailed.

There was a long period after the war when they didn't see one another, though they frequently corresponded. Then, twenty years after, they met again at the Second Conference of War Veterans in Moscow. It is said that a hardened soldier will never show a tear. That's not true. Their eyes filled with tears which rolled down their cheeks but they weren't ashamed. Then came a pensive silence and recollections which really need no words to convey.

"Remember what took place outside Maly Bukrin?"

"Naturally."

And again the two smiled meditatively and again silence reigned.

Another flashback. Their plan to attack the nazi Kommandatura seemed flawless. Klein wore the uniform of a German major, the two partisans, Andrei Milentkov and Grigory Alexeyenko, the uniforms of German privates, while Kasym Kaisenov posed as a locally recruited *polizei*. Only Robert knew German, the others didn't know a word of it, and had to keep their eyes open for Robert's every action. They appeared as if out of the blue before the Kommandant's office which was tucked away in a small wood. The sentry was about to bring up his submachinegun to fire, but he at once sprang to attention the moment he heard the major sharply cry: "Are you blind, you oaf?" Robert flung the door wide open. Inside, besides the Kommandant were four officers and several soldiers. In a calm voice brooking no objection, Klein said: "Put up your hands! Hold still. Resistance is useless!"

First to rise and put up his hands was the Kommandant himself. The officers and the soldiers were disarmed and taken out of the room by Milentenkov and Alexeyenko. They now had to pull out in a hurry. This was a short summer night and daylight was already breaking. Suddenly they heard a truck chugging up from the direction of Zolotonosha. In it were a group of nazis headed by an officer. Kasym posted himself in front of the Kommandatura, as Robert walked up to the truck and beckoned the driver to stop. He then ordered the officer to follow him inside. Pulling his pistol, Klein said: "Tell your men to throw away their weapons or you've had it."

Klein had hoped to get off without firing a shot, but at that moment he heard shooting. Contrary to their officer's instructions, two of the German soldiers had jumped out of the truck and, walking into the yard, had bumped into the partisans. In the nick of time, Robert rushed out of the Kommandatura and shouted: "Stop firing! We're surrounded by partisans!"

The confused nazis dropped their weapons. Besides a whole detachment of prisoners, the partisan quartet brought back to base a truckload of munitions and victuals.

At the war veterans' conference, Kasym Kaisevov presented his friend and brother with his latest book: "Partisan Trails." "Read it," he said, "I've written something about you, too."

Afterwards the two friends met rather frequently. Klein went to Alma-Ata to visit Kasym. They strolled through the autumn avenues and popped into the local GPO to send off wordy cables to Kiev, Poltava, Kharkov, Vinnitsa and a host of other places. This all occurred five years

ago, during the autumn celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Ukraine's complete liberation from nazi occupation.

The Ferry

Noticing me look at the pram standing in the corner, Galina, Robert's wife, explains: "We're celebrating the christening of a grandson."

The next thing I notice are the pictures on the walls. Galina is an artist.

"We were thinking of calling the boy Robert/" she says, "but since we have another grandson by that name we decided to call him Roman instead."

Robert's eldest son finished the Lenin Guards tankmen's school in Ulyanovsk, the one that Robert had finished. Today Igor is a senior lieutenant and lives in Kazan. The younger boy is an engineer, the daughter, a doctor.

There is always a heap of mail on Robert's desk. College students, factory workers, friends and acquaintances write, many wanting to know what he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for. Realizing full well how embarrassing it is for this overly modest man to answer that question, I shall try to tell you how this came about.

As Oberleutnant, Hauptmann and Sturmbannführer the Soviet tankman waltzed with death for two long years. One day the partisans captured a colonel from Hitler's General Staff. His uniform happened to fit Robert to a T. Now, with Senior Lieutenant Alexander Tkanko masquerading as his adjutant, Klein, wearing the colonel's uniform, drove around occupied Ukraine

in a captured Opel Admiral, passing on all intelligence gathered to the Soviet Army Command. Once he received an assignment from Moscow to detain the enemy on a sector of the Dnieper's left bank and prevent the nazis from ferrying their troops across before Soviet army units came up. Hugging Robert as he said good-bye, Timofei Strokach, chief of staff of the Ukrainian partisan movement, observed: "I have a friend whose German is better, I think, than that of Goebbels, and upon whom an SS uniform looks better than on Kaltenbrunner. Add to this his daredevil pluck and you can see why he does so well. At any rate, I again wish him good luck!"

That night the rain had settled the dust of the country roads. The gleaming Opel passed clanking panzers and roaring trucks as it made at top speed for the pontoon bridge. The "Oberst from the Fiihrer's Staff" slammed the door and strode towards the nazi officer who sprang to attention and saluted him. "Don't let a single truck across!" he shouted. "Return all who have crossed. Dig in on the left bank. Reserves will soon be coming up."

The Kommandant was not one of those who have to be told twice. However, he gasped with surprise and thought to ask the Oberst if he had heard right when the latter yelled at him: "Why unshaven? Why these filthy boots? Gott im Himmel! Instead of meeting the enemy squarely you're ready to beat it! As the Fiihrer's authorized officer I forbid this! Fulfil this order at once!"

"Could the Herr Oberst give the order in writing?" the Kommandant stuttered, his face pale.

How long can a second drag? Klein knew that

these seconds were crucial. Again his cool head won the day. Noticing that his "adjutant" Alexander Tkanko^ had opened the car door to have free access to the hand grenades beneath the tarpaulin cover, he pursed up his mouth with contempt and unbuttoning his tunic slipped a hand into his shoulder holster. Then, in a flash he pulled out his revolver and shouting, "In the name of the F^rer!" shot the Kommandant on the spot. He himself assumed command. When all the panzers, armoured carriers, trucks, guns and infantry, in short, an entire division had mustered on the left bank, the Soviet command was informed that the assignment had been fulfilled.

Like the Others!

That Monday I met Robert at the door of his office. He looked worn out. The previous night he had been awakened by a telephone call telling him that flooding was expected. The torrential April rains had caused the capricious Oka to crack the ice and overflow its banks.

"I didn't ask a single soul to come," Klein told me, "but all the drivers turned up this night to a man. They're fine fellows, the sort who never let you down and with whom one could take on any combat assignment, if need be!"

"Was it hard-going, Robert?"

The interminable ringing of the telephone kept interrupting. Still, in passing, creasing his forehead, he observed: "No harder than for the others."

However I could see the dark rings around his eyes and the deep furrows. Now I understood much better why newspaper articles about him

are so sparing with information. There has never been any mention that apart from Soviet decorations, he was awarded the Virtuti Militari for gallantry displayed in the liberation of Poland.

Then, thanks to the intelligence he gathered, the partisans, operating conjointly with Polish patriots, were able to launch an attack on a large nazi munitions factory,

"As far as I know, Robert, you were awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour recently, weren't you?" I asked.

"Yes. It seems they appreciate what our Trust is doing." That was all. Despite the fact that on a table in the drawing-room, I spotted in a heavy wine-red binding the certificate of Honour, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation had awarded Robert on his 60th birthday, and next to it a steering wheel, the size of a 5-kopek coin with the skilfully engraved front of the Berlin Reichstag as it was just after it had been taken. This is what Robert's wife, Galina, told me about it:

After the war. Captain Klein, who by then had been demobilized, had been sent to the GDR as an automobile expert with a group of colleagues-engineers. He stood out because of his impeccable German, and the workers of the enterprise to which they had been attached, couldn't help noticing that. Before they were to leave for home, an elderly German in overalls approached Robert and handed him the keepsake with the words: "This is just a symbol. Comrade Klein, but it means a lot. By chance I got to know of your war-time exploits. We are both Germans who work in motor transport and fought against fascism, I was on this side, for which I was thrown into a concentration camp and later freed by the Red

Army, You were on the other side, at the fighting front. This small keepsake was made by our workers, for whom the capture of the Reichstag was the same joyous event as it was for you, Soviet people."

As we say good-bye I think to myself: What am I going to write about this legendary partisan, when he hardly told me anything about himself?

AT A COLLECTIVE FARM

Any one riding along the Chuisk Highway in Kirghizia is sure to notice the sturdy, spacious, baked-brick cottages of the Luxembourg settlement, nestling in the shade of neatly-spaced tall Lombardy poplars and leafy, branchy elms. The broad streets are fenced off from house plots by brightly coloured low railings. The overall picture suggests that the village is the handiwork of able architects and builders. Actually this is an ordinary collective farm named *Trud-Vflich* means labour-and the members build their own homes according to their own taste and in their own way. They are certainly not architectural experts; they love their farm and want their homes to be attractive.

It is easy to see that this is so when you get to know any Luxembourgan.

Past History

Everyone on the *Trud* Collective Farm, old or young, knows Iwan Gelichman and respects him greatly. Though over 70 and long since on pension, he still has plenty of pep. In the first few years after the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, this son of a German collier from around Akmolinsk, fought against the counterrevolution and later in the 1920s, helped to liquidate

the Basmatchi bands in Central Asia, Later, he was sent to Moscow to attend a two-year course for "Red managers". Upon completion, he held executive posts in Frunze, the capital city of Kirghizia.

Gelichman is always fond of telling his grandchildren how he fought for Soviet power and how the collective farm was organized. During those now distant years many Soviet Germans moved from Northern Kirghizia to a place called Kant in the Chuisk valley. Some wanted to bask in the warmth of the southern sun, others simply followed in the wake of relatives. They came by camel and bullock, even by foot. Horses often failed to hold out and on this long trek dropped dead from the heat and lack of fodder. In the new place the settlers hastily threw up huts of wattle and mud and started to build a new life.

Though working in Frunze, Gelichman often came to see his fellow Germans in Kant. In 1930 he helped them organize the collective farm, of which he was elected chairman four years later. State-provided machinery, implements and seed enabled the farm to quickly develop and steadily increase its earnings.

However, Gelichman kept thinking about the neighbouring Kirghiz Djailma collective farm. Either the managers were incompetent, or changed too often, or the erstwhile nomads couldn't cope, but affairs there were in a pretty bad way. Most of the land remained vacant, crops were niggardly and the herd of cattle showed no increase.

One day he called on this farm to consult with the *aksakals*, as the elderly and more respected collective farmers are known in local idiom. He

suggested that they merge with his farm. His knowledge of the Kirghiz tongue and Kirghiz custom was a help and he found them quite amenable. After the merger, many Kirghiz moved to the central estates of the *Trud* collective farm, where they were given help to build better houses and granted a calf per household. Thus Germans and Kirghiz pulled together to multiply their collectively owned wealth.

Second Generation

Much snow up in the mountains of the hoary Ala-tau has melted since. The population of the *Trud* collective farm has trebled. However, there is not much land, only some one and a half thousand hectares, which comes out to approximately two hectares per farmer. Yet these farmlands have to suffice to grow sugar-beet, grain and fodder, as in the south they border on snow-capped mountain ranges, in the north, on the neighbouring republic of Kazakhstan, in the east, on the limits of the district centre, and in the west, on the estates of an agricultural school.

Realizing that they couldn't expand, the farmers decided that they had to get more from each hectare. Whereas back in the 1930s a per hectare average of 1,8 tons of wheat was considered a record, today the average is 4.6 tons. As for sugar-beet, they now get a little over 48 tons per hectare. Meat output has reached 420 tons.

I shall not go into how they run their farm, but merely emphasize that they have dedicated themselves to the land with the same love their

forefathers had for it. In short the apple does not fall far from the tree.

For without this love of the good earth, Otilie Seidel would have never held on through the grim tribulations of wartime.

During the war only old people, women and children were left behind on the farm. Otilie was only 16 when she learned to drive a tractor. She worked from dawn to dusk and whenever headlights burned out, drove by torchlight.

When the menfolk came back from the war, Otilie switched to the dairy section, where she obtained a record milk yield. She was among the first to merit the title of Master of Animal Husbandry. She is a deputy of the local village Soviet and for her fine work has been decorated with the Order of the Badge of Honour.

The same Order has been awarded to the farm's best herder, a Kirghiz named Ergesh Kudakeyev, who for more than ten years now has been tending sheep in the faraway steppes of Kenes-Anarkhai in Kazakhstan, where the farm leases pastures. He has braved the most rigorous winters without losing a single sheep.

Many good words could be said also about Iwan Mohr, the farm's No. 1 sugarbeet team leader, who has been decorated with the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, and about Jakob Wacker, who, starting off as a rank-and-file collective farmer, has been farm chairman for twelve years now. For distinguished labour, he received the Order of the Badge of Honour and later, the USSR's top award, the Order of Lenin. There are also many younger second generation collective farmers who are carrying on tradition with distinction and who have also been decorated for their exemplary work.

Third Generation

It is often deplored that young village folk hanker to go to town. At the *Trud* collective farm there are certainly more than enough enticing factors. Next door lie the Kirghiz capital of Frunze, and the district centre, with its factories. Then there is not enough land. The farm has long stopped taking on any outsiders, as it has more than enough of its own people. Any young person who has graduated as a machine operator must first spend a year or so doing ordinary work to show his worth before he is allowed to handle a machine.

Nonetheless, most local youth are not in a hurry to seek their fortunes elsewhere. In fact, under-SSs comprise between 65 and 70 per cent of the total number of collective farmers.

What makes them stay? The example afforded by their seniors? Their love of the farm? The smell of the good earth? No doubt that, but not only that. Farm life is changing, becoming more and more like life in town. Thanks to increasing incomes, the farm is in a position to allocate more for cultural and public services, amenities, and improvements. Thus, only recently it built a first-rate ten-year school, and is currently putting up another still roomier and more imposing club with a capacious auditorium, lounges, gym, library facilities and rooms for orchestra rehearsals.

It is noteworthy that the collective farmers really enjoy music and athletics. The farm eleven placed first last year at the district football tournament, and this year is proving its worth in the Chuisk valley tournament. As everyone knows, it takes years to build up a good team.

No wonder it is not easy to drop out. Some remain with the team, others with the band, and still others like the congenial atmosphere.

Take Peter Fallman. After his term in the army he came back to resume his place driving a tractor.

Though Helene Steerwald is only 19, she has already won respect as a dairymaid and is in her third year of studies at the local agricultural school. Only recently she was appointed laboratory assistant in the livestock section. Extremely active in social affairs, she has been elected to the district Soviet the local body of government. She is enthusiastic on the job and knows how to infect others with her enthusiasm. She is respected for the way in which she sticks to her guns and Won't brook any shortcomings.

Or take her friend Helene Heinz. The calves she tends put on nearly a kilo a day, a record even the veterans have never achieved.

The young folk do a good job, and their earnings are as good as in town. Last year, the collective farmers averaged a monthly cash payment alone of 132 roubles each. But that's not all. At the end of the year, after the balance sheet is totted up, they get still more in cash and kind. Added to that is the money made from private plots and livestock.

Like all Soviet citizens, young collective farmers have every opportunity to raise their educational standards and acquire any trade or profession, agricultural or not. More and more local secondary school-leavers enter college. There are families where all the youngsters study in one way or another.

Take the Schaberts. The father, who died several years ago, was the farm's head bookkeeper.

The mother, Maria, worked in the vegetable-growing team for a long time before becoming a tutor at the farm kindergarten. She has five children, all college students. Her oldest boy, Victor, studies by correspondence at an agricultural college and works on the farm as economist. Her daughter Lydia-teaches chemistry and biology at the local school and is in the fourth year of a correspondence course at the University in Frunze. The second daughter Rosa is working and also finishing studies at the University. The two youngest, Lyudmila and Maria, are also students: one is in her third year at the agricultural college, the other has just enrolled at the university department of history and wants, after she graduates, to teach at the local school.

The better you get to know the Luxembourgangs, the more you see that they indeed have a good life, which is also borne out by their very cosy and comfortable dwellings. Anyone settling down for good will never live in a makeshift dwelling. No wonder the collective farmers' houses look so sturdy and attractive.

PAPA. DELL AND HIS FAMILY

"Why should people be afraid of having large families, I wonder", Berta said, looking at me as she continued to finger a pile of photographs. "They've given us a great deal of joy."

"And trouble too," Daniel added. "For what family wouldn't have its troubles while the children are growing up? And we have nine, let me tell you,"

Falling silent, he patted the curly locks of his small grandson Andrei, sitting him on his lap, he continued: "I suppose we have had far more worry than a family with only one child would, because something is bound to happen to each of the kids at least once. On the other hand, I think we have had nine times as much joy and delight, haven't we. Bertha?"

She nodded, smiling serenely as she listened. She has long known how his mind works, that he will surely slip in something of his pet maths. Little by little I, too, grew accustomed to this manner. Several days had passed since I arrived at the *Yubileiny* (Jubilee) state farm in the Salsk steppes not far from Rostov-on-Don.

It had all begun with a letter to our newspaper, The writer had described the Dell family, the family of a village schoolmaster living in the Salsk steppes. The couple were most fortunate, he wrote, and could rightly take great pride in each of their nine children, all of whom, except for the youngest, Eugene, who was still at a

Seamen's school, had already completed or were about to complete a higher education.

Papa Dell himself teaches maths. For long he was headmaster at the local school. Mama Berta is a kindergarten tutor. As an educator, Dell is well known in the neighbourhood, having taught several generations of fellow villagers.

We were sitting in the terrace. When winter comes, all that remains of it is its wire fencing. But in springtime Mama Berta brings her dexterous fingers into play and by summertime it affords good refuge from the heat. Summertime is a pretty busy time at the Dell's. Their children often come to stay with them. With them at the moment were their son Vladimir from Tomsk, with his wife Lyuba and baby daughter Inna. Vladimir wanted to introduce his wife to his parents and show her his boyhood home. The couple were getting ready to take a walk to the pond.

"You'll take Inna with you?" Papa Dell asked.

"Of course," Vladimir replied. "Let her also see where I grew up."

From early boyhood Vladimir was used to the serious way in which his parents treated him and what was of interest to him. In the life of a child nothing is insignificant. What the child becomes, how rich his inner world is, greatly depend on the general mood in the family. A platitude perhaps, but something most manifest in Papa Dell's large family.

Vladimir is neither the oldest nor the youngest of the nine children. He was born in 1950, a year after his brother Valery. They have such wonderful boyhood memories, it's not surprising, they so often yearn to be back home. In their teens, aware of Papa Dell's craze for maths, the two

boys spent many a long winter evening delving into the intricacies of one or another problem, before jubilantly announcing that they had come up with something new. Papa Dell showed great tact in explaining that they had only rediscovered what had been found before. He took every care to cherish and further their interests.

One after another Valery, Vladimir and their kid brother, Alexander placed first in school contests in maths, physics and chemistry in their home republic. At the Ministry of Education of the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic they wondered who from the YuMeiizy farm would win the next contest and how many more mathematicians were being grown there.

Their diplomas and honour certificates are prized possessions in this gleaming, whitewashed cottage that stands next door to the village school. From time to time the Dells take them out and look at them and the photographs of their now grown-up children.

One is a picture of a man about 30, with a clever, though stern face, with two boys and a charming young lady whose winning smile, somewhat unexpected in so formal a cabinet picture, is most becoming. This is Victor Dell, one of the older boys, and his family. They live in Vinnitsa, in the Ukraine, where Victor, an associate professor at the Polytechnic and a Candidate of Sciences holds a chair in computer equipment.

As I was examining the photographs. Papa Dell pulled out his wallet and took out a neatly folded sheet. This was a cable with just a few words, saying "I'm a student now, Rita." The cable had come also from Vinnitsa, where the youngest daughter had gone to enter the Polytechnic. "I don't have to worry about her," Papa

Dell said. "She spends hours over her books. As for working out mathematical formulas, she had to do that right before the board of examiners, as she was asked something which isn't in the school programme." At once he started to draw something to explain more clearly what she had been asked. In an undertone, Berta added: "She'll be alright there, since Victor's there with his family, and all our children are very much attached to one another."

Most of the letters they get carry the Tomsk postmark on their envelopes. In the life of the Dell family this Siberian city and its Polytechnic play a special role, because if you were to ask there for a person by the name of Dell, you would be asked, which Dell you wanted, the student, researcher or professor.

There is nothing facetious about this. The Tomsk Polytechnic is a huge place with plenty of interesting people, all busy with the serious matters, so nobody would think the many Dells there as something unusual, though, truth to tell, six people from one and the same family is a bit unusual. Still, the main thing is what they have managed to achieve in Tomsk, First to go there was Harry, the oldest boy, who took his doctorate at the age of 31. But about him a bit later. A few words at first about the others. For instance, Vladimir, whom I was introduced to when visiting Papa Dell.

In Tomsk Vladimir took me to see his lab. We found another two gentlemen there tinkering with bits and pieces of machinery. From time to time they exchanged a couple of words. The door kept opening and banging shut. Wititout much ado Vladimir dismantled a gas bottle and exchanged it for a smaller one. The entire affair

seemed pretty impressive-though far from slick as yet. As he worked, Vladimir kept up a steady string of explanations, convinced I would understand everything. He seemed to realize that I was there, but everything around and Vladimir himself reminded me of what his older brother, Professor Harry Dell had told me. "The researcher," he said, "lives in his own world of maths, physics or whatever."

"There you are," Vladimir said. "You may take anything. I took this simply to show you the working principle."

On the screen his fingers, dark at the joints, and diffusive towards the edges, reminded me of an X-ray.

But there's still a long way to go before Vladimir can ink in the last dot.

Vladimir became interested in research while a student. He has already collaborated in work for which there are two patents, and has contributed several papers at major scientific conferences. Which is pretty good for a young man of twenty-five.

And now Harry, Professor Harry Dell currently lives and works in Voronezh, which was where I met him. Pushing aside a pile of neatly written sheets of paper, Harry began to tell me about himself and his family. He was rather hesitant at first and I had to draw him out, but then he warmed to his theme. It seems that in his family he had had a reputation for being the laziest, preferring reading, music and the writing of poetry to everything else. But he was a wizard at maths. Studying the subject under his father's direction, he was always way up in front. When he came to Tomsk to take the entrance exams there was always a crowd around

him at the hostel where he put up, wanting him to solve their problems for them. But at the exams he got only a B in maths, as he hadn't followed the prescribed form. He took his postgraduate course in the strength of materials, a discipline which students usually find very hard. But at the lectures on this subject, as Harry says, he was fascinated seeming to physically sense how loads made ceilings and girders buckle and bend. He thinks the research he was asked to do for his postgraduate thesis would have never produced anything novel, had he not hit on the idea which started it all. What happened was that he devised a new way of solving certain engineering problems, which has now been acknowledged by the experts and is already being applied in production and research. When he presented his thesis for a Candidate degree, he spent the morning operating a computer, as his thesis was only the beginning of a much larger problem. In the interval he raced off, presented the thesis and went back to the computer, where congratulating friends found him later.

Because of their novelty, the problems Harry was now occupied with as Associate Professor attracted a following of young people-former fellow-graduates, students, and engineers from various research institutes. Whenever the group went camping out in the taiga, Harry was again the life of the party. He was also up to ears in social work-as president of the local council of young scientists, and one of the founders and heads of the Tomsk school in mathematics. College instructors, students and ex-graduates flocked to his lectures on higher mathematics.

Harry decided he would take his doctorate

at the Bauman Higher Technical School in Moscow. In the capacity audience filling the School's main hall were many eminent Soviet mathematicians who had come, attracted by the doctoral subject. No wonder some thirty questions were submitted to the contender. Without a single dissenting vote Harry was awarded his degree.

Shortly afterwards Harry accepted a chair at the Voronezh Polytechnic, and his dissertation, which was published under separate cover became the standard manual for students and researchers. I spotted a copy in Papa Dell's home. On its title page Harry had written in his neat hand: "To my parents from the author."

THE DEPUTY

The Amangeldy farm club was hard-packed long before the concert was scheduled to begin. Small wonder, as the affair had been arranged for the state farm's best workers specially in honour of the anniversary of the founding of the Komsomol (Young Communist League). After the show the audience stayed on to give a hearty vote of thanks not only to the performers but also to Natalie Gellerts, one of the farm's Komsomol committee members, for having organized it all

Among those who extended congratulations were Yermen Karimov, an accounting clerk in one of the field teams and Argyn Sareyenov, the farm manager-true, not so much as representatives of the audience as Natalie's sponsors for CPSU membership. For it had been the farm Party organization which had given her the assignment of supervising amateur talent activities, when voting on her admittance to CPSU membership. With the aforementioned concert she was demonstrating her worth-not only as organizer, incidentally also as entertainer who sang Russian, Kazakh, Ukrainian and her own German songs.

The only fly in the ointment for Natalie that night was that her mother was unable to attend because of ill health. Natalie's mother, incidentally, has merited the proud title of a Mother-Heroine for the eleven children she has brought

up. They are, besides Natalie and her older sister Lida, both of whom are working, a brother studying at the Agricultural College in Tselinograd and eight younger brothers and sisters of school age at home. Her father, the farm's chief engineer was there,

"It was largely out of the desire to show Mother I was quite grown up/' Natalie says, "that after eight years at school I went to work on the farm, however, not before I'd promised by all that I held dear that I would continue my studies in my spare time."

Natalie started out as assistant to a team cook. However, very shortly she realized that what interested her far more than dishwashing was how to drive a tractor. After the harvest season, she, with classmate Tamara Akulich, enrolled in a tractor-driving training class and upon its completion was certified to drive. Soon she was being held up as a shining example, and, though but eighteen, was elected to the local Soviet.

Natalie next had a hankering to operate the powerful K-700. When she and her friend Tamara were permitted to do so, some were sceptical, However the two have been doing good work for almost four years now, not only plowing and sowing, but also hauling freight to nearby Tselinograd, Highly regarded by the local people for their skilful, safe driving, they were delegated to represent the farm at a republic-wide plowing contest. Subsequently, Tamara went on to enter the nationwide competitions in Rostov.

Recently Natalie was elected to the Tselinograd Regional Soviet. Though this has greatly added to her duties, she continues to drive her K-700 and also study in her spare time at the

department of scientific farming in Tselinograd's agricultural school.

Natalie is today one of those public-spirited people known as the Party-Soviet *aktiv*. She is *proud* of this because such activists *help make* towns and villages more attractive, life better and bring closer the wonderful world of the morrow.

WATER OF LIFE

East of Pavlodar, roughly halfway between the Irlysh and the Kulunda, the village of Konstantinovka bursts into view like a steppeland mirage. With pools of sparkling blue water, flower gardens and elm and poplar avenues, with rows of white-and-blue cottages hedged by shrubbery and streets and lanes converging upon a central square dotted with flower beds. Around its perimeter, behind the rows of poplars are the collective farm head office, multiple store, hotel and palace of culture. The place is neat, attractive and cosy.

Konstantinovka is the heart of the *Thirty Years of Kazakhstan* Collective Farm, one of the republic's wealthiest, of which Hero of Socialist Labour Jakob Hering has been chairman for 18 years now.

Jakob was born in Georgia in the Luxemburg community, founded in its day by immigrants from Wixrttemberg. From the age of nine, since 1941, he has been with his brother and grandmother in Kazakhstan. Like many who in war-time began to work while still in their early teens, despite his tender age Jakob herded cattle and did other jobs he could handle, while in winter he attended a trade school. Upon completing the school, he worked as a collier in Karaganda, but was unfortunately trapped in a cave-in, fracturing hip, spine and several ribs. Confined to a plaster-of-Paris cast for many long

months he whiled away the time with intensive reading and after his discharge from hospital enrolled in an agricultural school. Unable to sit for long he did his homework standing up at a tall desk he had made himself. Nevertheless he persevered, finishing the school with distinction, and still earlier than that, winning a sports rating in boxing. He then went on to college, where he did well, and several years later, presented a thesis, based on his own experiments at the collective farm, for the academic degree of a Candidate of Science.

He came to the farm he now heads to take up duties as its chief livestock expert-the one and only specialist in those difficult years when the farm was trying to get back on its feet after the war. There was little in the way of machinery, manpower and livestock. He was soon elected chairman, though not 24 yet, thus becoming Kazakhstan's youngest to hold this post. When he received the title of Hero of Socialist Labour he was again the youngest in the republic to merit this high distinction.

Today the farm is out of the red. But before that was to come about, Jakob, the moment he became chairman risked borrowing from the state an enormous sum for those times, which he used to build not farm premises but cottages and to pay higher rates-all to make life better for farm members, keep them from leaving and attract outsiders.

Then Jakob applied and got from the government the lease of 25,000 hectares of pasture lands some 250 km away which he himself went to pick. True, at the beginning he had some difficulty in getting the new farm board to agree. However, today the farm grazes a large flock of

sheep there and, in summer, the young of its cattle herd, which are brought there by trailer. The farm has built a small community centre there with all the necessary ancillary facilities, while water comes from the new Irtysh-Karaganda canal that cuts right through the middle of the leased land. The venture has proved a great success, helping out the farm time and again in the lean years.

Though the farm would seem to have enough land of its own-some 40,000 hectares, all told-it is low-yielding, mainly due to lack of water. The nearest source of water, barring the brackish waters of the neighbouring lakes, is the Irtysh, 80 km away, a bit too far. Meanwhile rains are rare-except during the harvest season when they are totally out of place. Now and again there is some amount of summer rainfall-but often after the tender budding shoots of wheat have been laid flat by the dry scorching winds. The climate is markedly continental, with but some 80 sunny days, of which half are scorches to boot. Because of the dryness, the use of mineral fertilizer is pointless. Grain is good only once every four or five years-and even then when climatic factors are favourable.

However, Jakob is one of those persevering ones who never say die. He cannot imagine this land not doubling the effort invested, despite all the attending drawbacks. Take everything from it that it can give, is his motto. The farm is proud of its high-yielding herd of beef-and-dairy cattle, a crossed Siemmental-Jersey strain which Jakob first began to breed even before he became farm chairman and which he wrote his thesis about for his Candidate degree. The farm grosses millions of roubles in annual income-not

only from the land and cattle but also from the mink and silver fox farming launched on Jakob's initiative after thorough consultations with experts from the Omsk Agricultural College.

Started as a side-line, fur-farming has developed into a highly profitable venture. The silver foxes and minks, of some 5-6 tints, are housed in neat sheds in extensive pens on the outskirts of Ravnopol, a satellite-village. With a staff of but 15-16, the fur farm nets about 400,000 roubles a year. The idea has also caught on outside the Pavlodar Region.

And there is the story of Uzium-Kamys, a completely unusable tract of land, it seemed, where nothing grew, not even a blade of grass and where in summer air and ground temperatures soared to respectively 46 and 70 degrees Centigrade. Today the farm takes in per hectare crops of 27 tons of maize, up to 30 tons of sugar-beet, up to 40 tons of water melons, 23 tons of tomatoes, 32 tons of carrots, etc. Artesian water worked the miracle.

It all began one dark November night in 1960, when out in the steppelands Jakob happened to spot a stalled car. Its driver, a young hydrogeologist by the name of Nikolai Shaimerdenov, a Kazakh by nationality, gave the interested farm chairman some notion of the hypothesis scientists had postulated. They claimed that waters from melting Altai snows and glaciers partially sluiced off into the ground to flow north beneath the entire Siberian Lowland where, incidentally, the farm is located. It was suggested that between 640 and 900 metres down there were three impressive water-bearing strata, flowing towards the ocean, like all the great Siberian rivers do. However, before entering the

Arctic Circle, these underground streams, blocked by an arch of tertiary rock, seeped upwards to produce marshland and swamp. Shaimerdenov had been with the hydro-geological party sent out to verify the conjecture and see what could be done to use the subterranean waters for farming. But as agricultural managers were sceptical, the geologists were about to pack up for want of extra funds.

Next morning Jakob convened the farm board and proposed to them that the farm subsidize the geologists. After much argument-the farm at that time still didn't have much to spare-the board decided to risk it, as water was someliing they desperately needed, what with only two fresh-water wells to the entire village. By February they struck water, which began to gush out at a rate of 18 litres a second. This was the first successful artesian well in the Irtysh valley.

In the autumn of the following year of 1961 Jakob was delegated to a congress of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Happening to be up on the platform, he found himself seated next to Kanysh Satpaev, then President of the Republic's Academy of Sciences. Seizing the opportunity Jakob told him all about their artesian venture. Satpaev, a Kazakh who himself had come from the steppelands around Pavlodar, paid close heed, and when Jakob had Shaimerdenov and the report on his findings flown into Alma-Ata, put in a word for the farm before the appropriate authorities. As a result another nine wells were sunk. When the first bumper crops were reported the republic's Minister of Land Improvement provided Jakob's farm with funds to build an irrigation network for a tract of land amounting to 862 hectares.

Today the farm has around thirty artesian wells. As first in the area to employ subterranean waters for irrigation, it had to tackle many aspects of the problem, such as the techniques of irrigating the local light soils and the best plants to cultivate, to mention but two points, all on its own. Jakob supervises the work done by the farm's lab, which functions as a far-flung outpost of the USSR Research Institute for Irrigational Mechanization and Engineering, which is located outside Moscow. The results achieved in perennial experimentation with different irrigational devices and patterns, with various plants and the like, were summed up in a voluminous treatise with a paragraph-long title, whose meaning could be briefly reduced to "water of life", and which in 1975 was nominated for the Lenin Prize, the USSR's top award for accomplishments in science, technology and culture.

Round the clock, all year long the artesian wells irrigate fields and fill reservoirs. The farm currently owns seven powerful "Frigate" watering units and plans to purchase twice that number soon, despite the cost. This, in addition to a number of conventional overhead DDN-100 sprinklers and the Czech-made Sigma irrigation system. Currently under irrigation are about 1,300 hectares from which the farmers obtain bumper per hectare crops of 3-3.5 tons of wheat and even oats and 40 tons of maize, besides three cuttings of leguminous grasses.

The difference between an ordinary plowland and an irrigated tract is as striking as between a courtyard in town and a hothouse. Watching a "Frigate" unit in operation is like seeing a colourful extravaganza. All around is blazing sun-

shine and eddies of dust, but you see a man-made rainfall and a rainbow you can walk straight into. And the results produced are even more fantastic.

As striking, I would say, is the contrast between Konstantinovka itself and the entire surrounding semi-arid desert. Water has not only brought wealth to the farm as such; it has changed the very appearance of Konstantinovka and its satellite Ravnopol. Today they stand amidst a chain of ponds and "seas", as the farmers call the bigger bodies of water up to some 90 hectares in area. These man-made storage lakes spell two or three crops a year, carp, duck-breeding, and boating and bathing. Being planted currently is the third of the parklands enclosing the two villages, and in the intervening two kilometres bungalows and two-storey cottages are being built along two shady connecting avenues to which all carrier traffic has been barred. Construction of this agrotown, to accommodate from nine to twelve thousand inhabitants, is proceeding rapidly, with the farm providing both funds (between a million and a million and half roubles a year) and manpower (a building division of 111 workers). The farm will have six school buildings all told, when the three now under construction are completed. There are plans to put up another ten kindergarten-and-creche complexes, nine shops, another canteen, and even a restaurant with seats for 164 clients at a time.

As one enters the village the eye dwells with pleasure on the two attractively tiled buildings nestling amidst trees, of school and hospital. *The* hospital, incidentally the biggest in the district, cost the farm along with its sophisticated equip-

ment and housing for its medical staff, a total of 1,200,000 roubles, Jakob has plans for a locally-based mud-baths clinic-though the farm long ago purchased for its members a holiday home in the Black Sea resort of Sukhumi.

Over the past four years the farm has tripled its capital to the grand total of 16 million roubles. And now that there is everything one could possibly conceive of~in the way of a well-appointed community, enough manpower, premises and equipment, and, last but not least, water-the farm is rapidly multiplying its commonly-owned wealth. It maintains the district's biggest beef and dairy herd of 4,500 head, gets the largest milk yields of 3,300 kg a cow and runs a 9,000-head pig factory.

All this, though, has never caused the farm chairman to lose sight of general amenities and cultural standards. Houses are attractive and built to last, with from four to six rooms, and have central heating, running water and, in many cases, bathrooms. The "Rainbow" farm club (palace of culture) has 600-seats auditorium, with a huge stage and equipment for showing 70 mm film, a dance hall and two reading rooms. No wonder it often bills recitals by touring professional entertainers, besides the amateurs of its choirs, jazz, brass band and choreographic and dramatic groups. And though the farm has some hundred college- and technicum-trained specialists, enough for all its needs, it provides scholarship grants for seven-eight students from among its members, who, upon graduation, will come back to work for the farm in their newly acquired specialities. This, apart from the many collective farmers taking university-level instruction by correspondence. Then there are the lo-

cally-based vocational school and Beethoven music school, which has some 120 pupils.

The clue to all of Jakob's successes as farm chairman is simple. From the very outset he has put the wellbeing of the farmers first.

No wonder, in 1974 Jakob Hering was elected to represent Pavlodar Region in the country's parliament, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

THE ARCHITECT

It is only natural for people to want to live in quiet and congenial surroundings with plenty of sunshine and greenery, free of the exhaust fumes and dangers of nearby traffic-filled streets. One already feasible solution is provided in full detail by Urals architect Hugo Schaufler.

Architects living in this present, 20th century, have come up with more than enough of fantasy cities of the future as the answer to rapid urbanization. They have placed houses-in theory so far-under ground and on seabed, or high up in the skies with all traffic pushed underground. Movable flats attached to pillars rising out of rivers and streams have been suggested, as have been "castles in the air" with inflatable walls, and whole towns under domes of glass. In short, we have been offered projects whose daring novelty is far removed from habitual notions of functional expediency, and, all the more so, from technical feasibility. But forward-looking Hugo, in contrast, has both feet firmly planted on the ground. His projects are realistic and vital.

Some ten years back Hugo first proposed his system that created a furore in the architectural world. Passions have long since died down, and now the system is taught in architectural manuals-

The gist of the idea is to "segregate" traffic and pedestrian. Traffic is allotted its own special roads with no pavements or pedestrian objec-

tives like shops, public services, or house entrances, but only a strip of greenery plus man-holes for access to underground mains. The roads are flanked by rectangular or, preferably, U-shaped blocks of flats, enclosing an inner "yard" of between 50 to 150 hectares in area, with only footpaths as shortcuts to roads and public conveyance stops. Room is provided for a community centre and parking and motor services along the roadside strip. Besides being more comfortable to live in (better recreation, shopping and other facilities, faster and safer driving and cleaner air), such towns, as Hugo has shown, are cheaper to build, as pavement and road lengths are cut by 50 and 20-40% respectively, the asphalt area by 30-40%, and the number of intersections and street crossings by respectively 30-50 and 50-60%.

The new principle is currently being employed by Hugo's pupils in the Urals city of Nizhni Tagil to build a residential estate for a quarter-million inhabitants-which, incidentally, will cost two million roubles less than if traditionally constructed, and in projects for two big new zones in the leading Urals city of Sverdlovsk. Similar housing estates are going up in Surgut and in Asbest, the last in a forest, with every care being taken to preserve the scenic beauty of the area.

Hugo believes his "segregation" principle all-important for modern town-building and essential to practise immediately, as it will take at least a decade to complete such projects-which may, naturally, vary from town to town. Especially is this timely for the Arctic and Siberian oil cities-though for other reasons-which Hugo and his disciples are planning.

But, first, Kirov Square, Sverdlovsk's largest and handsomest. Behind it stands the austere classical, well-proportioned colonnade of the Urals Polytechnic, in front, going down a slight gradient, stretches the city's main artery, the broad Lenin Prospect, with solid-looking buildings, some most attractive, shopwindows, trams and buses, fashionably attired pedestrians and rows of trees. The question rises: while the new principle may well do for an empty site, what does one do in the case of an old, established city plan? How should the "segregation" principle be fitted in with such a typical pedestrian-and-traffic artery as Lenin Prospect? Who gets priority-pedestrian, or motorist?

"The pedestrian, without doubt," Hugo says. "We've long worked out the solution. Lenin Prospect has two very good duplicating streets, running parallel the entire three-kilometre length and, moreover, at an optimum distance of 300-400 metres away. They could handle the entire load of traffic, leaving Lenin Prospect a purely pedestrian thoroughfare. Of course this will mean replacing offices of no civic importance with shops, restaurants, amusement centres and sundry infra-structural elements such as kiosks, flowerbeds, statuary, and advertisement along the present roadbed. This will all add up to a still roomier and more attractive community centre-which, incidentally, has been approved by eight out of every ten Sverdlovans polled in this connection."

Kirov Square, in whose replanning Hugo hopes his principles will be realized, is, incidentally, most closely connected with Hugo's own life-because he holds the chair of architecture in the department of civil engineering at the

Urals Polytechnic back of the square, because he lives in the first house on Lenin Prospect just up in front, because he is a graduate of the Polytechnic and because the house in which he lives and its twin across the road, and, for that matter, the square itself, were all designed by him.

Hugo's first few years after graduation, the early 1950s, were an eventful period, during which he designed the building of the Drama Theatre in Irbit and several cinemas, and also won the competition against heavy odds for the design of Kirov Square and several buildings in Sverdlovsk.

But came a day when this no longer gave him creative satisfaction. Was he to go on designing a building here and a building there all his life? No, he had to pause to take stock, and set himself higher goals, which he would need all his energies to attain. In an abrupt changeabout, he entered the post-graduate course at the Central Research Institute of Urban Planning and accepted the chair in architecture at the Urals Polytechnic, where he was soon appointed associate professor, though he had no degree as yet and had not taught for long either. Finally, in 1964 he presented his Candidate thesis on a highly complex, although very timely subject of the complex planning of neighbourhood units known as "micro-districts". Such are the landmarks of this chapter of his architectural career, one of hard work and novel finds, arousing the amazed enthusiasm of some and the equally amazed opposition of others. The controversy that preceded the formal presentation of his thesis already demonstrated what uphill going it would be for him to get his innovations across.

As Hugo had dovetailed his architectural innovations with the urban features of the Central Urals and Siberian zone, it was no wonder that in 1963 the Urals Planning Office approached him and his chair at the Polytechnic with a problem of major state importance-that of investigating the obtaining conditions and of drawing up recommendations in urban planning for Western Siberia. This was a time when an intensive start had been made on the exploitation of the hitherto untapped wealth of Tyumen oil. While architects were heatedly debating what cities and towns here should look like, these selfsame communities were being built up erratically and haphazardly. Needed were well-argued proposals that would take into account the social composition, climate, natural scenery, working conditions and a host of other factors. Hugo's chair is now the brain centre planning the oil and gas towns of Siberia.

In the summer of 1974 Hugo sent out one more party of three researchers and twelve student assistants to investigate the socio-demographic structure of the population of Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk, Heftyugansk and Meghion.

What should be built?

How should it be built?

Where should it be built?

These questions could be properly answered only when there was a clear and distinct answer to the question for *whom* they would be built.

Juri Uthof, a young researcher who went along with the party says: "Our job is to study every three-four years the socio-demographic

pattern of the urban population in the Ob valley. In this way we get a dynamic picture of the situation. Just how well the people interviewed like the living and general conditions and how well public services, amenities and utilities are organized determines the basic question of whether the incoming person stays for good, or decides to pack up and go home. Which means that every nuisance and annoyance must be eliminated. For instance, many, mostly with families, would like to have their own houses, or at least a semi-detached house, with their own garden. Young folk and professional people, meanwhile, prefer tall blocks of flats. So we have to know the ratio and the relevant factors before we begin. True, local conditions are such that it's not always easy to meet every wish. These are marshy places, with not much room for the family-cottage living. And we think that Arctic towns because of climate and roads are better for living when more compact."

Hugo and his chair are suggesting for cities up North the continuous "ribbon type" of house as an integral element of their overall approach to urban planning. For small Northern communities this type of house would be self-contained. By a system of indoor passages tenants would reach the service centre-in the central part of the building-with its food and industrial goods stores, library, laundry and, possibly, post office and cinema, without having to go out into the cold. When properly organized, anything ordered by phone-a library book, or a carton of milk-could be delivered by a pneumatic tube service.

Another practical convenience is that the continuous house is better lighted than the rectangular block. Then, though it may seem cumber-

some^ it lends itself better to landscaping-in the first place because by implementing another major point that Hugo makes, mains and sewerage could be confined to basement, which would mean no uprooting of trees, no digging of trenches, shorter distances to cover and easier maintenance.

As a 100 per cent urban planner, Hugo realized soon after he had presented his Candidate thesis that it was inexpedient to put together new "micro-districts" from old-type houses. He began to design his own or select available designs by brother architects for his own "segregation" system, for Arctic towns and the so-called linear cities. One such house is the terraced block of stepped flats with the roof of the lower serving as terrace for the next one higher up and with garages, storage rooms and services in the windowless section. There is nothing novel in this. Hugo had seen such houses before in Norway and Munich's Olympic Village, as well as the older prototype, the Caucasian hillman's "saklia" in some mountain villages. What Hugo did was to adapt it to the wooded irregular terrain of the Central Urals and the sunless Ob valley, where it could meet otherwise unrealisable desires for family cottage.

Hugo has also designed a special type of house for his "segregation" system, the sound-insulated galleried house for noisy, exhaust-choked roads. All the windows in the flats overlook courtyards except for the bedroom windows which are sound-proofed and triple-glazed. On the odd floors it has running along the entire length of the roadside wall, from the ground floor up, glassed galleries serving as passageways leading towards the flats.

The USSR is building extensively, rehousing some eleven million people annually. Which means its architects are in a position to design not merely groups of buildings, let alone isolated houses, but whole towns or neighbourhoods, thereby providing a package solution for the entire range of issues involved—from the aesthetic appeal to the zonal pattern.

Hugo's innovations have won him a following in Kiev and Krasnoyarsk and among the architects designing Moscow's new Chertanovo residential area, who find them more radical yet better than their own experimentation—not to mention his own Central Urals "fief", where in many cities and towns local architects have accepted them as their guideline.

When a year ago Hugo completed his doctoral dissertation, the net product of years of research, his erstwhile supervisor told him he had blazed so many new trails it was mind-boggling. What realization of all the ideas and proposals it incorporates will spell in terms of money is difficult to assess even roughly. For who can say what the price is of quiet, ease, and comfort, of a breath of fresh air, of the pleasure derived from looking at a woods?

HIS CALLING

Whenever a spaceship takes off from Baikonur, Wilhelm Seibel knows that several days later he will prepare a homecoming spread for the cosmonauts. True, often he has to wait for quite some time-when spacemen dock with orbital platforms where they spend weeks. At any rate, he gets to know of a touchdown from space-more often than not somewhere near Karaganda-sooner than many others. He usually gets a telephone call, at home or at work, to load up with provisions and start out. He packs himself and his chief helper Viktor Gross, into his "Moskvich" and drives out to welcome the cosmonauts back. He will never fail to ask them their favourite dish, anything special, apart from the Ukrainian-style borschch, the Siberian ravioli, clear soup, chicken fricassee and what-have-you, that he has to offer. To his great disappointment they are not particular gourmets and will often ask for an ordinary chop, like Andriyan Nikolaev did when he got back. Still, even then, his plainest fare is something special. When he once treated cosmonauts to Kazakh-style milk tea, they fancied it so much that before leaving they begged him to give them some, thinking it a special brand!

Seibel is good friends with most of the cosmonauts, especially those who have been up more than once, or drive out to welcome a brother spaceman back. Easy-going, humour-loving Yeli-

seyev, once, having his photograph taken with Seibel, wisecracked: "Why, he's like the Earth as I saw it from up there!" Seibel is certainly no weakling; though tall he does look pretty round, tipping the scales in his socks at 147 kilos. But as is usually the case with the stout, he is a good-natured, congenial soul, appearing in the eyes of cosmonauts returning from the bleaknesses of space, as part of kind and cosy Mother Earth. At any rate, for his part, he puts his best ladle forward to make their homecoming a real treat.

Among those who know Seibel rates-and deservedly so-as Karaganda's top chef and confectioneer, "He'd certainly be in the right place in 'Orbit' " (the name of the city's newest, swankiest restaurant), local public catering managers say. However he has no intentions of moving from the big delicatessen on *Nlir* (Peace) Boulevard, where he's been for several years now and has a free hand at culinary experiment.

Most people living in New Town are familiar, if not with Seibel, at least with his culinary art, which is in great demand with both gourmet and the general public because of the wide-ranging assortment, tastiness and low cost. Among the up-to--forty dishes the customer may pick and choose from on the better-stocked days, one finds chicken, broiled, roasted, barbecued in Georgian style, and stuffed, liver pates, fish fried and in aspic, cakes, tarts and pastries, cold pork cuts, roast suckling pig, jellied dishes, and a variety of omelettes and mixed salads. Clients come to shop for a home party dinner, or to have a

midday snack, preferring the delicatessen to the nearby public dining rooms. Seibel is showered with requests to cater for banquets and family celebrations or to make a birthday or wedding cake.

When Nehru visited Karaganda with his daughter Indira Gandhi, Seibel was asked to set the table. He still remembers the message radioed from the incoming airliner. Nehru, a vegetarian, had asked for vegetable soup and potato croquettes as the main meal and grilled peas and Viennese coffee for lunch, and a special cake for his daughter. Seibel says Nehru complimented him on the soup, while Indira found the cake and the local Besh-Barmak mutton stew delicious.

Seibel cooked for Nehru in the mid-1950s, shortly after moving to Karaganda from Andizhan, where he says he found the weather too hot. He applied for a job at the open-air summer cafe, next door to the "Central" Restaurant.

asked for references, he suggested that he be given a one-day trial. He got the job and soon had the cafe's daily intake rocketing from a mere 1,500 old roubles to 11,000-attracting virtually the entire clientele from the nextdoor restaurant.

Later he took up duties as chef in the mining equipment factory canteen, where, as he himself says, he fed the working class. He derived great pleasure from this, offering tasty, low-cost meals. The many diplomas won at city- and republic-wide culinary contests have never afforded him as much delight as the daily thanks received for his working-class dinners.

Seibel makes no secret of his recipes and often gives talks to housewives on the noble art of

cooking at the Miners' Club and in TV programmes for women. He also passes on the knacks of his craft to pupils, of whom he has more than seventy. From two, now in the army, he gets letters, in which Anatoli Rogovenko describes meals cooked for his regimental mates, while Peter Fischer notes that the men wolf down with relish everything he serves. Seibel is delighted. He would like to see more young men take up this challenging profession well worthy of men, and dedicate themselves to it with all their heart like Viktor Gross, who though a college-trained engineer, preferred to start anew and is now his able, trusted helper.

FREUNDSCHAFT'

I met Herbert Leicht, art director of the German "Freundschaft" variety group of the Karaganda Philharmonic society after they had taken the bow at their last 200th concert for the season at the city's Miners' Club. He told me they had had similar capacity audiences on the two-month long tour of German communities in the Republic. Still earlier they had been acclaimed by audiences totalling 50,000 when touring Siberia and the neighbouring republics of Kirghizia, Tajikistan and Turkmenia. In the six years since the group started it has given upwards of a thousand performances, including billings in the old Central-Russian cities of Voronezh, Tambov, Tula, Ryazan, Orel and Penza.

Of the USSR's two million ethnic Germans, around half live in Kazakhstan. Many are keen amateur artists who readily entertain fellow-villagers and workmates from club stages. One could mention the family orchestras of the Beimers and their eight children in the new metallurgical centre of Dzhezkazghan, or the Millers in Karaganda. Small wonder "Freundschaft" billings draw packed houses.

In the German-language newspapers "Neues Leben" that is put out in Moscow and "Freundschaft" published in Kazakhstan, one often comes across notices, in which spectators highly commend "Freundschaft" recitals. Thus, Lilia Ruf wrote in from Karaganda region: "That

night everyone in the village of Pokornoye, young and old, packed the local club for a concert by the 'Freundschaft' group, tickets to which had been sold out long before they arrived. The musicians were excellent and Herbert Leicht's skits in the vernacular and Lilly Schrimm's compering evoked hearty laughs. Erwin Penner and Lore Friesen gave magnificent renderings of German folk dances." Hilda Gottfried-Frank of the regional centre of Aktyubinsk enjoyed Maria Penner's yodeling, and Minna Schmidt-Schneider of the village of Voznessensk near Tselinograd said she was overwhelmed to hear an entire concert in her native tongue.

Who are these entertainers drawing so much applause from grateful audiences? The variety orchestra is comprised of trained musicians who handle diverse instruments, from electric organ to clarinet with facile ease. The Penners, husband and wife, are one-time amateur artists, who have been with the group since it first organized. Erwin delights audiences with temperamental performances of comical Bavarian and Tyrolese folk dances rehearsed to perfection under the direction of choreographer Nikolai Sidorov of the Kazakhstan Concert organization, while Maria wins applause for her enchanting renderings of folk ballads. Now attending classes in the Kazakh capital of Alma-Ata, she will return with a group of younger Germans currently taking classes in dancing and singing at the Variety Studio run by the Republican Ministry of Culture.

The group invariably bills German folk dances and songs that German writers, poets and composers resident in the republic help to arrange and produce. Recently the Kazakhstan Publishers brought out composer Oscar Geilfuss's anthology

of 50 folklore songs and ballads of a historical, revolutionary and general nature, while Arthur Mettus has arranged folk tunes specially for the "Freundschaft" orchestra.

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Редактор *А. Карлов*

Переводчик *А. Шкаровский*

Редактор-стилист *Я. Ричмонд*

Редактор английского текста *И. Оков*

Художественный редактор *Ю. Еремин*

Технический редактор *О. Матвеева*

Технолог *Е. Тумакова*

Сдано в набор П.8.75 г. Подписано в печать 26.9.75 г.
Формат 70X90/32 Объем 2,25 печ. л., 2,63 усл. л., 2,57 уч.-изд.
Тираж 15.000 экз. Зак. 685. Изд. № 3728. Цена 16 коп.

Издательство Агентства печати Новости.

Типография издательства Агентства печати Новости.
Москва, ул. Фр. Энгельса, 46.

